



Asbestos

Office of Air Quality

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Description:

- Asbestos is the name given to a group of minerals naturally occurring in the environment as bundles of fibers that can be separated into long, durable threads. The fibers are resistant to heat, fire, and chemicals, and do not conduct electricity, making asbestos popular for use in a wide range of products, including building materials, automotive parts, and heat-resistant fabrics.
- In the late 1970s, the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (U.S. CPSC) banned the use of asbestos in wallboard patching compounds and gas fireplaces. In addition, in 1989, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) banned all new uses of asbestos and the use of asbestos in certain building materials. Uses established prior to 1989 are still allowed.
- Most products made today do not contain asbestos; products that do contain asbestos must be labeled as Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs).
- Two common types of asbestos fibers include: chrysotile, the most commonly used asbestos in the United States; and amphibole, the most commonly used asbestos in thermal insulation.
- ACMs can be classified into three types: sprayed/troweled-on material, Thermal System Insulation (TSI), or miscellaneous items.
 - Sprayed or troweled-on materials are used on ceilings or walls for decorative, acoustical, or fire-proofing purposes in homes, schools, and other buildings.
 - TSI asbestos is often found as insulation on boilers, water and steam pipe elbows, fittings, and pipe runs.
 - Miscellaneous materials include all materials containing asbestos, which are not included in the sprayed/troweled-on material or TSI classes. Examples include floor tile, some sidings, ceiling tiles, automotive products, rubber tile matting, and gasket materials.
- ACMs are found in either a friable state, which means the material can be crushed or crumbled by hand pressure, or a non-friable state.
- In general, asbestos fibers do not break down into other compounds, evaporate in air, or dissolve in water. Because of this, asbestos fibers often remain unchanged over long periods of time.

Environmental Impacts:

- Asbestos may enter the air or water through:
 - The degradation or breakdown of manmade products containing ACMs;
 - The demolition or renovation of a building containing ACMs;
 - The mining of asbestos mineral deposits or manufacturing of ACMs.
- Asbestos fibers and particles may remain suspended in the air for long periods of time and may be carried long distances by wind or water before finally settling.
- Because low levels of asbestos are present in soil, water, and air, everyone is exposed at some point in their life; however, this asbestos exposure is minimal and, in general, does not pose a health risk.
- Asbestos does pose a health risk to individuals with acute exposure (exposure to high/concentrated levels over a short period of time) or chronic exposure (exposure to lower levels over a long period of time). It is common for asbestos-related symptoms to not appear until 10 to 20 years after the exposure.
- Exposure to asbestos-contaminated air or water can result in the intake of asbestos fibers into the body. Asbestos fibers can remain in the body, particularly the lungs, for a substantial period of time. Studies have linked asbestos inhalation with an increased risk of lung disease, cancer, and other health conditions including:
 - Asbestosis, a chronic lung ailment caused by the buildup of lung scar tissue with symptoms such as shortness of breath, permanent lung damage, and increased risk of lung infections;
 - Mesothelioma, an asbestos-caused cancer of the chest cavity lining and abdominal cavity;
 - Cancer, related to prolonged asbestos exposure, including cancer of the lung, esophagus, stomach, colon, and pancreas.

IDEM's Role:

- The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) is responsible for protecting human health and the environment while providing for safe industrial, agricultural, commercial, and governmental operations vital to a prosperous economy.
- IDEM's Office of Air Quality regulates the removal of ACMs from commercial, industrial, and institutional structures. Residential structures and apartment buildings with four or fewer units are exempt from both federal and state regulations.
 - IDEM is responsible for conducting compliance inspections at facilities undergoing asbestos removal.
 - IDEM is responsible for the licensing of asbestos removal professionals.
- IDEM's Office of Land Quality has regulations that govern the disposal of ACMs from commercial, industrial, and institutional structures. These regulations vary based on the type of ACMs to be disposed and generally require that they be properly packaged, labeled, manifested and disposed of at landfills that are approved to accept such material.

Citizen's Role:

- If you suspect asbestos is present in your home and it appears to be in good condition, do not disturb it. Generally, material in good condition will not release fibers. If no fibers are released, there is likely a low risk of danger.
- Check material regularly if you suspect it contains asbestos. Do not touch it, but look for signs of wear or damage, such as tears, abrasions, or water damage. This is especially true if the material is often disturbed by hitting, rubbing, or handling, or is exposed to extreme vibrations or airflow.
 - If damaged asbestos is present, contract a licensed asbestos professional to either repair or remove the damaged asbestos. IDEM strongly discourages homeowners from repairing or removing damaged asbestos themselves as improper handling increases the risk of exposure. If you attempt to repair or remove damaged asbestos, contact IDEM's Office of Air Quality for guidelines on safe asbestos handling and disposal.
- Before remodeling your home, contract a licensed asbestos professional to locate any ACMs in your home and perform any remodeling to areas containing asbestos.
- If you suspect that you have been exposed to asbestos in your home, contact your physician to be tested for exposure and your local health department for information on how to test your home.
- For verification of an asbestos professional license, create a list of asbestos professionals, or find a training course provider, visit the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency's website at <https://mylicense.in.gov/EVerification/>.

More Information:

- For more information on asbestos licensing, E-Verification, and training course providers, please visit IDEM's website at www.IN.gov/idem/health/2334.htm.
- For more information on asbestos work practices, asbestos handling and disposal and notification guidelines, please visit IDEM's website at <https://www.in.gov/idem/asbestos/>
- For health-related asbestos questions and concerns, please visit the Indiana Department of Health's website at www.IN.gov/isdh/18886.htm.
- For contact information for your local health department, please visit the Indiana Department of Health's website at www.IN.gov/isdh/24822.htm.
- For more information on federal asbestos programs and policies, please visit U.S. EPA's website at <http://www2.epa.gov/asbestos> .

Applicable Regulations:

- 326 IAC 18-1 Asbestos licensing requirements
- 326 IAC 14-10: Work practice standards
- 40 CFR 61, Subpart M: National Emission Standard for Asbestos